

Is it a *Flu Shot* **FACT** or **MYTH?**

FALSE

“The flu is just like a bad cold.”

Influenza (flu) is far more dangerous than a bad cold. It's a disease of the lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 114,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 20,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are over 65 years old. But small children less than 2 years old are as likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

FALSE

“The shot can give you the flu.”

Flu vaccines are made from killed influenza viruses. These cannot give you the flu.

MAYBE

“Even if I get a flu shot, I can still get the flu.”

This can happen, but the flu shot usually protects most people from the flu. However, the flu shot will not protect you from other viruses that can cause illnesses that sometimes feel like the flu.

FALSE

“The vaccine isn't 100% effective, so I'm better off getting the flu.”

No vaccine is 100% effective. However, if you get a flu shot but still get the flu, you are likely to be far less sick than you would have been without the protection.

FALSE

“The side effects are worse than the flu.”

The worst side effect you're likely to get is a sore arm. The risk of a rare allergic reaction is far less than the risk of severe complications from influenza.

TRUE

“Not everyone can take a flu shot.”

If you are allergic to eggs (used in making the vaccine); are very ill with a high fever; or have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past, you might not be able to get this protection.

FALSE

“Only the very old and sick need a flu shot.”

Both adults and children who are in good health need a flu shot to stay healthy. Even if you aren't at high risk of complications, you should get a flu shot to prevent the flu and to protect everyone you live with and contact.

FALSE

“December is too late to get a flu shot.”

The flu shot can be given before or during the flu season. While the best time to get a flu shot is October or November, a flu shot in December or later will still protect you against the flu.



Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



**Fight
the
Flu**

For more information, ask your health care provider or call the CDC IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION HOT LINE — English **800-232-2522** Español **800-232-0233** Website **www.cdc.gov/nip/flu**